

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15
ACDA-12 MCT-01 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
/089 W

-----128164 231027Z /20

R 222254Z FEB 78 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5838
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
COMSIXTHFLT

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 05778

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS EG CY
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN PRESS CONTINUES ATTACK CYPRIOT LEADERS

REF: CAIRO 5596

SUMMARY: COMMANDER OF LARNACA RAID CLAIMS EGYPTIANS SHOT
IN BACK. TIES BETWEEN EGYPT AND CYPRUS "NOT BROKEN",
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SOME STAFFS WILL REMAIN IN BOTH CAPITALS, BUT AM-
BASSADORS WILL BE WITHDRAWN. COMMANDOS BURIED FOLLOWING
EMOTIONAL CEREMONY DURING WHICH CROWDS LOUDLY ATTACKED
PALESTINIANS. LYSSARIDES AND KYPRIANOU STRONGLY CRITI-
CIZED BY PRESS, WHICH CONTINUES ACCUSE CYPRIOT LEADERSHIP
OF COMPLICITY IN SIBAI MURDER AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS.
END SUMMARY.

1. SHUKRI REPORTS. BRIG. GEN. NABIL SHUKRI, COMMANDER OF LARNACA RAID, TOLD PRESS FEB 21 THAT HIS TROOPS WENT INTO ACTION ONLY AFTER IT CLEAR THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH TERRORISTS NOT PRODUCING RESULTS. CLAIMED HIS ASSAULT "SO SUDDEN THAT TWO TERRORISTS IMMEDIATELY CAME OUT AND SURRENDERED." HOWEVER, AS EGYPTIANS ATTACKED HIJACKED PLANE, CYPRIOTS OPENED FIRE USING PREVIOUSLY CONCEALED ARMORED FORCES. SHUKRI SPECIFICALLY STATED EGYPTIANS WERE "SHOT IN BACK." THIS, HE SAID, EXPLAINED EGYPT'S LOSSES. SHUKRI NOTED CYPRIOT ARMORED FIRE HIT EGYPTIAN C-130 KILLING THREE AIR FORCE MEN. HE LISTED EGYPTIAN LOSSES AT 15 DEAD (INCLUDING 6 OFFICERS) AND 17 WOUNDED (7 OFFICERS).

2. DIPLOMATIC TIES. ACTING FONMIN BOUTROS GHALI FEB 21 ORDERED IMMEDIATE RETURN OF EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR FROM CYPRUS. GHALI ALSO NOTED HE ASKED CYPRIOT AMBASSADOR TO LEAVE EGYPT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. DESPITE THIS, HE SAID DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS NOT BEING BROKEN AND NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS WILL BE PERMITTED REMAIN AT BOTH EMBASSIES TO CARRY ON NORMAL DUTIES. GHALI EXPRESSED APPRECIATION TO BRITISH FOR USE OF AKROTIRI TO RETRIEVE EGYPTIAN COMMANDOS.

3. FUNERAL. FIFTEEN COMMANDOS WERE BURIED FEB 22
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FOLLOWING MASS FUNERAL AT NASSER CITY, ON OUTSKIRTS CAIRO, TELEVISED LIVE THROUGHOUT COUNTRY. AS EXPECTED IT WAS HIGHLY EMOTIONAL AFFAIR, WITH CROWD LOUDLY DENOUNCING PALESTINIANS. (THIS THEME APPEARED IN UNUSUAL DIRECT ATTACK ON ARAFAT BY AKHBAR CARTOONIST WHO PORTRAYED HIM HANDS DRIPPING WITH BLOOD CALLING FOR TERRORISTS' PUNISHMENT.) EMOTIVE NATURE OF OCCASION ENHANCED BY FACT ALL OF DEAD WERE VETERANS OCTOBER WAR (ACCORDING GUMHURIYYA).

4. PLO LINK? AKHBAR QUOTED PLO REP IN CYPRUS AS PRAISING ORGANIZATION'S RELATIONS WITH GOC, NOTING PALESTINIANS WILL ASK FOR CUSTODY OF TERRORISTS. REPRESENTATIVE CLAIMED ASSAD HAD AGREED ALLOW HIJACKED AIRLINER LAND AT DAMASCUS, FOLLOWING WHICH HE PLANNED TURN KILLERS OVER TO PLO. ASSAD, REPORTEDLY, LATER AGREED WITH CYPRIOT PRESIDENT KYPRIANOU HAVE PLANE COME TO LARNACA, WITH PROVISIO PLO STILL TO OBTAIN CUSTODY.

5. LYSSARIDES. AKHBAR, QUOTING BRITISH PRESS, HYPOTHESIZED EDEK LEADER LYSSARIDES CONNECTED WITH LARNACA DISASTER. NOTING LYSSARIDES' INTIMATE TIES TO PLO,

SYRIA, AND LIBYA, PAPER SUGGESTED HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR KYPRIANOU'S "11TH HOUR DECISION" TO MOVE AGAINST EGYPTIAN COMMANDOS.

6. EDITORIALS. ALL PAPERS CONTINUED CASTIGATE CYPRIOT GOVERNMENT AND KYPRIANOU. AKHBAR CHARGED FACTS ARGUE KYPRIANOU AND ENTOURAGE GUILTY OF "COMPLICITY, SCHEMING, AND CRIMINAL PARTICIATION." CYPRUS, PAPER CLAIMED, SGREED IN ADVANCE TO SIBAI'S MURDER AND SAID TWO TERRORISTS ENTERED ISLAND ASSURED OF "COMPLETE PROTECTION." ARRIVAL OF EGYPTIAN TROOPS SCARED KYPRIANOU, WHO FEARED EXPOSURE HIS INVOLVEMENT. AKHBAR CONCLUDED CYPRUS LIVES ON TERRORISM, KIDNAPPING, AND RANSOM. CYPRIOTS LIVE IN "ATMOSPHERE OF TERRORISM", ACCEPTING THIS AS LEGITIMATE.
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THEY ARE PREPARED TAKE PART IN ANY TERRORIST OR CRIMINAL

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/089 W

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R 222254Z FEB 78
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ACT, AGAINST ANYONE, SO LONG AS THIS PERSONALLY PROFITABLE.

6. KYPRIANOU. AHRAH'S EDITORIAL CLAIMED PM
SALIM FULLY BRIEFED KYPRIANOU ON EGYPTIAN INTENTIONS.
COMMANDOS WAITED MORE THAN ONE AND ONE-HALF HOURS TO
GIVE GOC ENOUGH TIME NEGOTIATE WITH TERRORISTS. COM- .
MANDOS ACTED ONLY AFTER IT CLEAR CYPRIOTS INTENDED RELEASE
ASSASSINS, APPARENTLY UNDER PRESSURE FROM (UNNAMED)
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OUTSIDE PARTY. AT THIS POINT, ACCORDING AHRAH, NATIONAL
GUARD USED HEAVY WEAPONS TO ATTACK EGYPTIANS FROM REAR.
PAPER CONCLUDED EVEN IF GOC OBJECTED TO EGYPT'S ACTION
IT COULD HAVE WAITED UNTIL OPERATION COMPLETED AND THEN
PROTESTED THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, MURDER, INTERVENTION, PALESTINIANS, TERRORISTS, MILITARY EXERCISES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CAIRO05778
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780083-0994
Format: TEL
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780230/aaaaaysd.tel
Line Count: 197
Litigation Code IDs:
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Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9abcb7d2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 CAIRO 5596
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3528814
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EGYPTIAN PRESS CONTINUES ATTACK CYPRIOT LEADERS
TAGS: PINS, SOPN, EG, CY
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9abcb7d2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014